

The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington D.C. 20505

Executive Registry

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18 July 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: The President
The Vice President
Secretary of State
Secretary of Defense
Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

SUBJECT: Soviet Opportunities in the Middle East (S)

1. Our recent assessments of Gorbachev have focused on his energetic and innovative approach to domestic affairs in the Soviet Union--particularly the economy, where some of his actions and statements suggest potential for some change. He has yet, in our view, to turn his attention in the same way to foreign affairs, where he will confront both problems and opportunities.

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2. Many of the problems the Soviets have in foreign policy are of their own making, often due simply to ideological blinders or ham-handed tactics. One of the areas in which a more innovative approach could bring the Soviets significant potential gains is the Middle East. In the attached paper, the National Intelligence Officer for the Middle East, using the technique of creating a fictitious memorandum to Gorbachev, lays out some of the opportunities that might await Moscow in that region from the perspective of the new Foreign Minister Shevardnadze. While lacking foreign policy experience, Shevardnadze, as a Georgian, is familiar with Islam and the Middle East. While the purported Shevardnadze memo is long, it is uncommonly well written and both interesting and intriguing. I suggest it for weekend reading. It shows how troublesome a creative Soviet approach to the Middle East could be.

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William J. Casey

Attachment:

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